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25 August 1967



MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Bunker's 17th Weekly (Saigon 3824, 23 Aug 67,)

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Mr. Bunker's report this week deals largely with the election campaign, probably in more detail than you would care to cope with. His main points can be summarized as follows:

- a. The political campaign has gained momentum, and is going pretty well. The Ambassador regrets that Thieu and Ky are not participating in the joint campaign forays with other candidates, but notes that they are campaigning effectively on their own, turning official appearances to political advantage as incumbents normally do.
- b. A healthy indication of free campaigning is the severe criticism of the government by almost all civilian candidates; this criticism is being fully reported in the Vietnamese press. Another good sign is the apparently free functioning of the political organizations of opposition candidates throughout the country.
- c. Although Huong and Suu "are doing quite well," the Ambassador's "horseback opinion" is that Thieu and Ky will win with 35 to 45 percent of the vote. Huong should finish second with 25-30 percent, and Suu third with 20 percent, although he seems to be running stronger now than previously.
- d. The number of registered voters is now 5.8 million, an increase of 11 percent over last year. This represents about three fourths of the potential eligible electorate, demonstrating that the election will, in fact, be an expression of the will of the great majority of the Vietnamese people.

GEORGE W. ALLEN
Acting Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment
State Cable

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